



Difficulties and Coping Strategies of Selected Parents of Children  
with Non- Verbal Autism

An Undergraduate Thesis

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**ABSTRACT**

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**TITLE:** Difficulties and Coping Strategies of Selected Parents of Children with Non-verbal Autism

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**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

**A. GENERAL**

To know the difficulties and coping strategies used by the selected parents of children with non-verbal autism.

**B. SPECIFIC**

1. To know the difficulties encountered by the parents of children with non-verbal autism in different aspects such as financial, emotional, and social aspects and with the behavior of the child.
2. To know the strategies employed by the parents of children with non-verbal autism to cope with the difficulties encountered.



3. To know how the strategies employed by the parents of children with non-verbal autism help parents to cope with the difficulties they encountered.

**SCOPE AND COVERAGE:**

The study focused on the difficulties encountered and the coping strategies of selected parents of children with non-verbal autism. The criteria set for the respondents were: 30-40 years old, or in the early adulthood stage; limited to 9 subjects only, either the mother or the father depending on the availability and currently not separated.

**METHODOLOGY:**

The descriptive design was used in this study, specifically using the case study method. The researchers used the snowball method in which the selected parents of children with non-verbal autism were selected. The criteria set for the respondents were: 30-40 years old, or in the early adulthood stage and currently not separated. The numbers of subjects were limited to 9, either the mother or the father depending on the availability. The research instrument used was self-made interview guide questionnaire which includes open-ended questions about parents' difficulties encountered in handling children with non-verbal autism, how they cope with the encountered difficulties, and how the employed strategies helped the respondents cope with such.



**MAJOR FINDINGS:**

1. The interviews with the 9 respondents revealed that two of them had taken care of their children with non-verbal autism for 5 years; 4 of them for 4 years; 2 for 2 years; and one for eight months. 4 respondents finished college; two of them were college undergraduate; two were high school graduates; and one was a master's degree holder.
2. Most difficulties experienced by the respondents were categorized into five: financial aspect, emotional aspect, social aspect, psychological aspect and behavior of the child. Among these five categories the behavior of the child was the source of most difficulty of the respondents, including tantrums and resistant behaviors of the child, nonverbal communication, and sleeping problems. Both emotional and social aspects had the same number of response by the parents of children with nonverbal autism. The emotional aspect included frustration among the parents and experiencing emotional pain (when seeing their child different from other normal child and when other members of the family did not accept the child) and fear of having another special child and being afraid of the child's future. The social aspect composed of going out in public places and misconception of the



other people. The least of all categories was the financial aspect, which included expensive schooling and payment for hiring child's caregiver.

3. Among coping strategies, the behavior of the child was the most used among the five categories. The behavioral aspect of the child included handling tantrums and resistant behaviors. Parents alternated with other members of the family including the child's caregiver and learned more about the case of their son through reading, asking others, opinion especially those parents with same case, ask assistance, and professional help. At the same time, all of the respondents claimed that the strategy they used to cope with the difficulties was through gestures asking their child to pull them to the things wanted or pin point the things liked. In the psychological aspect, eight out of nine respondents said that their strategy to cope with the problem is through family planning and to the problem of fear of their child's future is through praying for the development of their child and ask Gods strength wisdom for handling their children with autism. In emotional aspect, four out of nine respondents claimed that to handle the difficulties, they try to express feelings to others such as friends and also to the parents with same cases. Three of nine respondents used to avoid



comparing their child with others. Four of the nine tried to look at the case of their child in a positive way by holding on the thought that they are more fortunate than those parents with normal child but who is bringing problems to the family. On the other hand, in terms of social aspect, seven out of nine respondents used the strategy of going out with two companions to assist when the child is having tantrums and going to other uncrowded places. Lastly, in the financial aspect, four out of nine respondents claimed that in order to support their finances, they must look for an extra income.

4. Most of the coping strategies used by the respondents were helpful, like expressing feeling to friends and other parents with similar case, using family planning, praying for the development of their child and asking God strength and wisdom in taking care of their child.
5. Most of the parents who have nurtured children with non-verbal autism for four years and above had less difficulties experienced compared to parents who have nurtured a child with non-verbal autism for two years and below.
6. The socio-economic status of respondents had relationship to the difficulties of parents of children with non-verbal autism in sending their children with non-verbal autism in a SPED school.



7. Most of the parents were college graduates and it had no relationship in terms of coping of parents of children with non-verbal autism in their difficulties encountered. Coping was based on how long parents nurturing children with non-verbal autism, because parents who already have many years of nurturing their child easily coped and had different coping strategies.

**CONCLUSION:**

The researchers conclude that all of the respondents experience difficulty in handling their children with nonverbal autism in terms of tantrums and resistant behaviors. The parents also use gesture and pointing to be able to identify what their children desire. The researchers also conclude that respondents have fear of having another special child if next pregnancy occurs.

The researchers conclude that in every difficulty, respondents used strategies to be able to cope, like trying to express feelings to others, such as friends and parents with same case, praying for the development of their child, and asking the opinions of the SPED teachers and specialist. These strategies are effective.

Most of the respondents do not loose hope on the case of their children with nonverbal autism. The respondents were looking forward for the development of their children with nonverbal autism.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

For parents of the children with nonverbal autism, they must be the first one to realize the importance of their acceptance and love in caring for child with autism. Parents should attend seminars that could enlighten their minds and help them find cues in handling children with autism. Parents should also have more patience especially when their child is having tantrums. Parents of children with autism don't be afraid and should feel free to express their feelings to parents with similar case because they could help these parents to accept their child and they could give some tips on how to handle children with autism.

For psychologists and practicumers they should try to help parents of children with autism whom they will be handling in the future, you could give these parents some tips on how to manage and protect their children.

For the counselors and SPED teachers, they should develop their way of teaching and serve as agents of change in the perception of people towards children with autism. Increase understanding of children with autism, and they should enhance their partnership with parents and families in order to treat the children with autism.

For the researchers who want to continue this study they should give more importance on how the strategies performed by the respondents help





them cope with the difficulties they encountered, to be able to know if the strategies would really help them.





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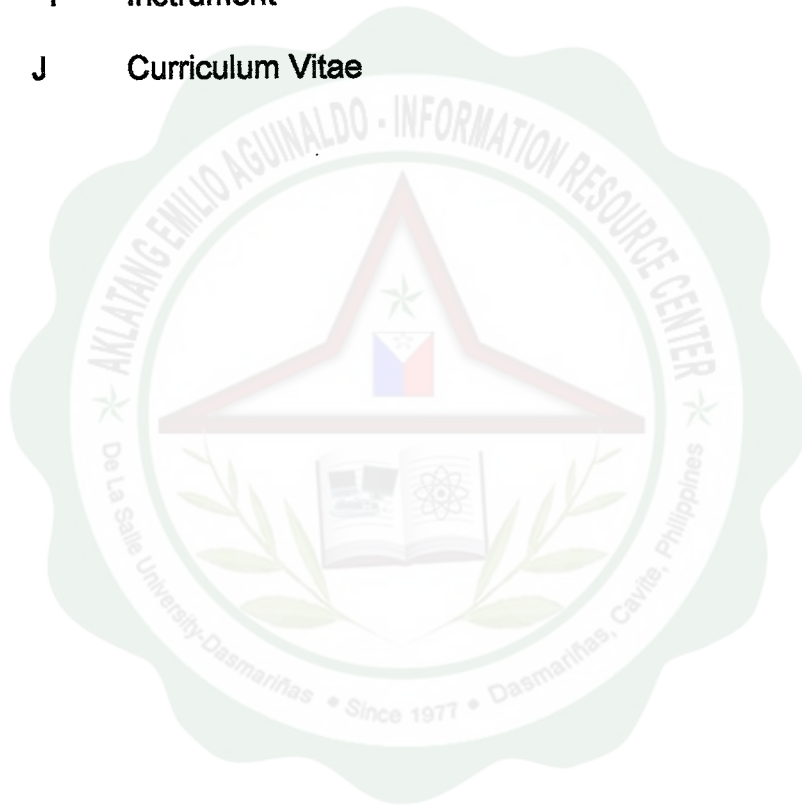
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